Forest cover in Madhya Pradesh

†1645. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to allocate more funds to Madhya Pradesh for forest conservations as Madhya Pradesh has bigger forest cover than any other State in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) Allocation of funds to various States including Madhya Pradesh is done on the basis of the guidelines of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes being operated by the Ministry, demand put forward by the States, submission of utilization certificate and availability of funds etc. Size of Forest cover is not a direct parameter for allocation of plan funds. The Ministry has, however, requested the Twelfth Finance Commission to recommend non plan assistance to States based on the total/percentage of area under forest cover.

Clearance to power projects in Krishna-Godavari basin in Andhra Pradesh

1646. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of decision of Government in empowering States to grant environment clearance to natural gas based power projects having a capacity of 3000 MW or less, instead of empowering States for clearance upto the capacity of 500 MW or less in view of huge natural gas found in the Krishna-Godavari basins in Andhra Pradesh and to avoid delay in commissioning of power projects;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether Government will assure of taking of a favourable speedy decision in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The Government has no proposal to empower State Governments to grant environmental clearance to natural gas based Thermal Power Projects exceeding a capacity of 500 MW.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Papikonda Sanctuary in A.P.

1647. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the Sanctuaries where the Indian Wild Buffalo is protected;

(b) whether it is a fact that Papikonda Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh is a Wild Buffalo Sanctuary;

(c) whether Government have allotted funds for the Sanctuary in 2003-04; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Indian Wild Buffalo is included in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and enjoys maximum protection. Wild Buffaloes are reported to be found in following National Parks and Sanctuaries:—

i. Kaziranga National Park, Assam

ii. Manas National Park, Assam

iii. Dibru Saikhowa National Park Assam

iv. Burhachapori Sanctuary, Assam

v. Laokhowa Sanctuary, Assam

vi. Pabitora Sanctuary, Assam

vii. Indravati National Park, Chhattisgarh

viii. Udanti Sanctuary, Chhattisgarh